

COPPER FALLS STATE PARK
State Highway 169, 1.8 miles northeast of Mellon
Mellen vicinity
Ashland
Wisconsin

HALS WI-7
WI-7

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

COPPER FALLS STATE PARK

HALS NO. WI-7

Location: State Highway 169, 1.8 miles northeast of Mellon, 36764 Copper Falls Road, Mellon, Ashland County, Wisconsin
Lat: 46.366594 Long: -90.646219

Significance: Copper Falls State Park is a significant example of both the conservation and tourism approaches to scenic and natural areas initiated by the National Conservation Commission and National Park Service. Its rustic architecture is equally significant: designed by Bernard Herbert Knobla, the buildings and structures were hand-crafted from local materials by members of the CCC and WPA forces during the 1930s. The careful handling of native species during the construction period helped to maintain ecological diversity within the park, while methods of erosion control and drainage systems exemplify engineering techniques of the time.

History: The original 1,160 acre state park is part of the Penokee-Gogebic Mineral Range, and includes waterfalls, a stretch of the meandering Bad River, much hilly inaccessible terrain, and spectacular scenic beauty. Stone pathways, bridges, functional camping and recreational areas, and park buildings were constructed by the CCC and WPA work forces. Over recent years the total acreage of the park has increased to 3,343 acres, including waterfalls, canyons, rivers, lakes, and wilderness. The plant and animal diversity present within Copper Falls State Park is also protected by its designation as a state natural area.

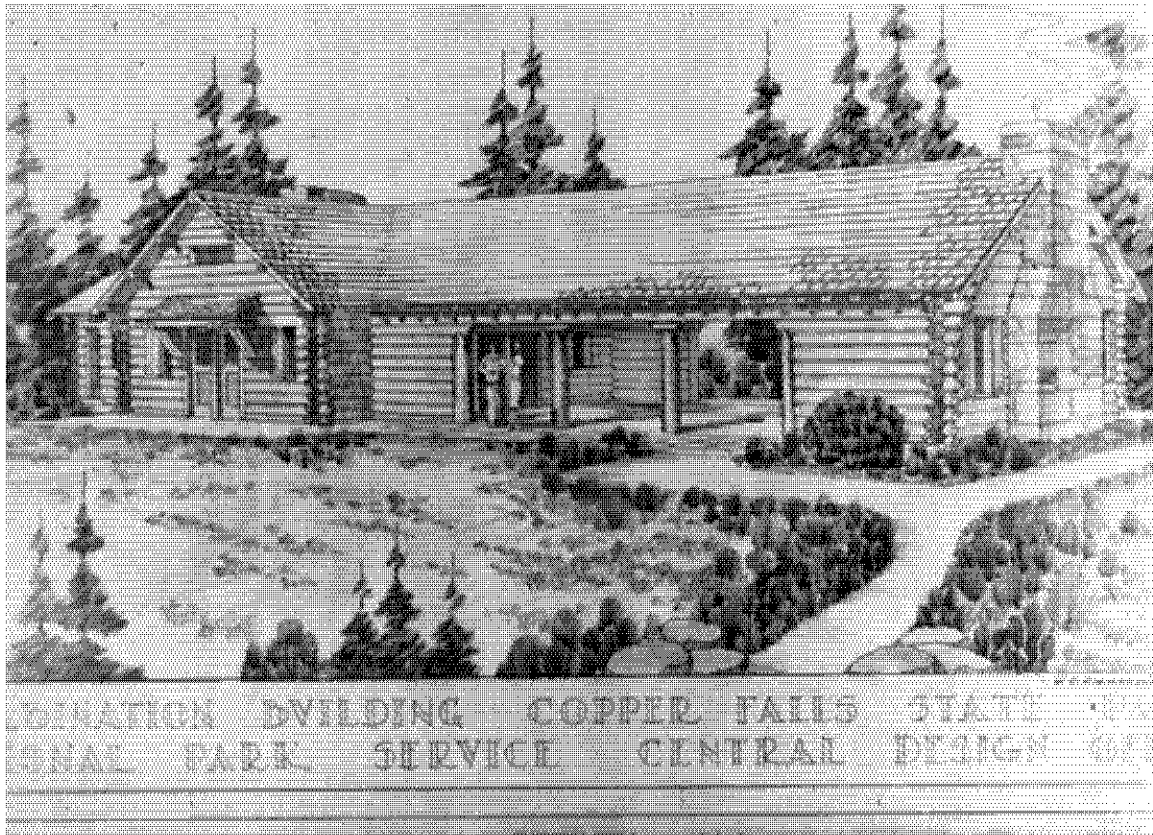
Inaccessible terrain protected the area from the surrounding lumber industry during the early settlement era. The mineral and timber-rich land was acquired by the State of Wisconsin between 1929 and 1936, partly as an attempt to reclaim cutover land in the northwestern region of the state. The Master Plan for the park, initiated between 1935 and 1953, was developed under the guidelines of the National Park Service. The park has been an increasingly popular tourist destination since the 1930s; recent figures put visitation at approximately 130,000 people annually

Sources: Schueller, Mary Kerker. *Rustic Reflections of Copper Falls State Park*. Richfield, WI: Rustic Books, 2005.

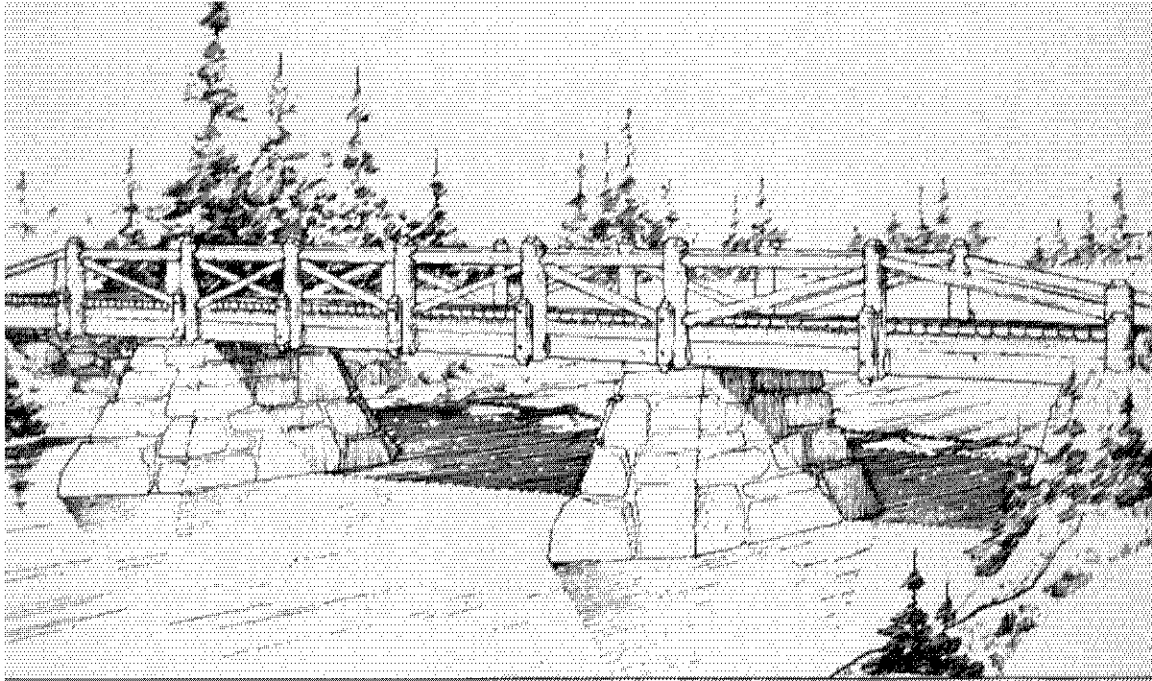
State Historical Society of Wisconsin, State Historic Preservation Office. "Copper Falls State Park," by Mary Kerker Schueller. Madison: 1974. (National Register of Historic Places Inventory- Nomination Form)

www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/parks/specific/copperfalls/. Accessed 1/10/07

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Drawing of the Combination Building at Copper Falls State Park; designed by Bernard Knobla in 1935
(Department of Natural Resources, State of Wisconsin, Madison).



A recently completed foot-bridge over Tyler's Fork in Copper Falls State Park.

Drawing of the footbridge over Tyler's Fork at Copper Falls State Park; designed by Bernard Knobla in 1935 (Department of Natural Resources, State of Wisconsin, Madison).